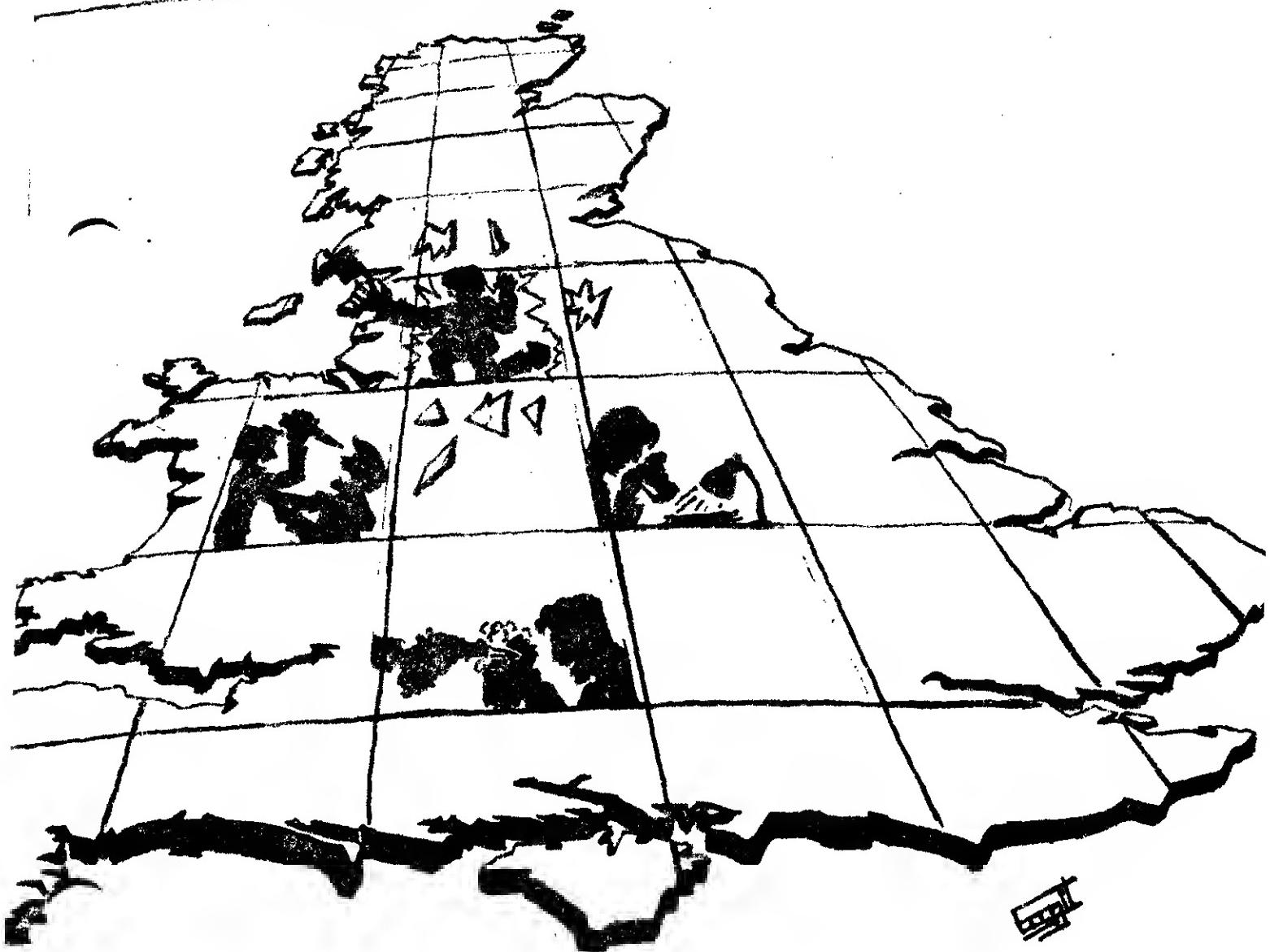


# CHIT



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ALBION is a journal of board wargaming. It is published on the first of every month at a subscription price of 2/- per issue, plus postage. Postal Diplomacy games are reported in COURIER, which is the section of ALBION created for that purpose.

Applications for places in Diplomacy games should be made to the editor Don Turnbull, 6 St. George's Avenue, Timperley, Cheshire, England.

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Contributions of articles to ALBION are welcomed; they should be typed or written legibly, and submitted as far in advance of publication date as possible. Such material should either be games-orientated, or should be satirical in nature.

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The AHIKS British Region Members' Bulletin is appended to this issue.

The front cover is by R. Emerson, the cartoon at the rear by George Forster, to both of whom our thanks.

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#### Editorial.

This is the first of the new-style ALBIONS, and I know you will all greet it with shouts of delight, modified somewhat by the reminder that you now pay for postage yourself. Apart from the new format, whereby the game reports are moved to COURIER, there's very little that's new. However we do have a new page layout, designed to fit more onto a page without losing the margin which was originally created to allow the issues to be filed in ring binders. I wonder, in fact, if anyone but myself actually uses a ring binder nowadays. Oh yes - Malcolm Watson uses one, also, so that must mean something.

We are in the enviable position, currently, of having one or two more articles than we can print, for space reasons. However this fact shouldn't deter you all from submitting your own article(s), and all contributions in this respect (as well as the other respect - cash!) will be gratefully received. We try to print your letters, too, but reserve the right to put the editorial red pencil through parts of them, if necessary. Encouragement in plenty, I always think.

ALBION Game Review Number 9.

THE FLIGHT OF THE GOEBEN.

(Strategic version)

Published by Poultron Press as part of the contents of Strategy and Tactics issue 21 (May-June 1970).

Price: the magazine itself sells for \$2.50 plus postage; this game is only part of the contents of the issue.

Background.

In early August 1914 two German ships - the Battlecruiser Goeben and the Lightcruiser Breslau - 'ran circles around a far superior force of the British Royal Navy, exposing the latter's command organisation for the antiquated and over-rigid system that it was.' The ships finally interned themselves in Turkey, pushing that country to the side of the Central Powers. This 'possibly extended World War I by 6 to 12 months.'

The game starts on August 2nd 1914 and ends (if victory conditions have not already been attained) on August 12th. It thus spans the date of declaration of war between England and Germany (midnight, August 4th).

Presentation.

A playing map is enclosed with the magazine, together with unit counter sheets.

The map should be mounted on some rigid surface (ply, in our case) for play; since the game centres around a Midway-type search procedure, a screen must be used to divide the two (identical) halves of the map.

Grid co-ordinates etc. are not necessary - the map is complete in all detail required, even for postal play.

The counters must be made by sticking the sheet on suitable card, then cutting around the outlines with a sharp knife. Some counters are very small, and care is needed to ensure a good result.

The game is, therefore, in 'kit' form - more so than the Test Series Games reviewed previously in these pages. However you can expect nothing more at this ludicrously low price.

One minor complaint about the presentation. In the same issue, there is another game called Chicago Chicago! (there are actually four games in the magazine, but this is the one which concerns us here). The map for strategic Goeben is printed back-to-back with the map for Chicago Chicago! and the Time Record/Hit Record sheet for Goeben is printed on the reverse of the rules for Chicago Chicago! Thus, if you want to play both games, you will have to obtain another copy of the map and rules for Chicago Chicago! This is annoying, but not insuperable. In a later issue of S&T, it is announced that extra maps can be purchased for \$1. In most cases, wargame enthusiasts will probably sacrifice the political Chicago Chicago! for Goeben.

The Rules.

These are printed in the magazine proper. Designer Dave Williams (he designed the Avalon Hill Anzio, amongst others) has done a good job of making the rules clear and easy to follow. There are a few points which might, perhaps, have been clearer, and we will mention these later. On the whole, good layout and clear presentation.

There are a few interesting innovations in the rules. Perhaps the most crafty is the Secret Die Roll (SDR). The game begins with neither player knowing what he must do to win, nor what he must prevent his opponent from doing. Then, on August 3rd, the German player picks a SDR; this, when matched with the German victory conditions chart, tells the German player the points he will gain by attaining certain objectives. The British player picks a SDR on August 4th, and matches this with his victory conditions chart. However, neither player knows, until the game is over, just what the opponent's victory conditions are. The objectives for all victory conditions are pretty similar, of course, so each player knows in rough outline what the other is trying to do.

The SDR mechanism works by using a set of unit counters, numbered 1 to 6; these are tiny, and need care in cutting out, but they are important, so don't just ignore them. There are 8 sets of these counters, giving 48 'die rolls' in all. A player who is required to make a SDR merely picks a counter at random from a bag, then lays it face down on the victory conditions chart, having first consulted the conditions required of him. The counter is thus on view to both players for the entire game, and this ensures no cheating by either player.

The SDR is also used in the advanced game in other ways - for instance the question of which side the Italians fight for is determined by a SDR. On the whole, this is a clever rule, and permits a realistic 'lack of knowledge' situation which has been sadly lacking in previous naval war games.

The designer has also included a method of simulating the adverse conditions under which some ships operated. Thus, while some ships are capable of 'fast speed' under search or battle conditions, they can't just turn it on like a tap; a set of rules governing the use of fast speed reflects pretty well the shortage of stokers, trouble with boilers, and general 'fouling' of operational efficiency through peace-time inactivity.

The rules are, in our opinion, very well thought out, and ensure interesting play.

#### The Play.

Players move ships in desired search patterns, then call out search areas in a similar manner to Midway or Bismarck. There is no air search, of course, but the main ocean search areas are quite large. Hence a player gets to know of the presence of enemy ships in large areas of ocean, even though they may be well out of sighting distance. This reflects very well the interception of wireless messages.

Coal consumption dominated naval activities in World War I, and both players have a coaling index by which means he can keep track of the amount of coal each ship has left. The British can take on coal from Malta, North African ports, or Toulon. The German can take on coal from Pola, from Italian ports (at a reduced rate) or from colliers, which are moved around just as are other ships. The collier is, of course, very vulnerable, and can be sunk by anything which catches it. They need to be protected carefully, therefore; however they perform a useful function in misleading the British - you can chase a ship for miles, thinking it is the Goeben, only to find that you are wasting time on a collier.

The main objectives for the German are to get the Goeben and Breslau off the playing board into the Atlantic, or into the Dardenelles. They also get points for sinking British or French ships, and for shelling North African ports.

The Allies' main objective is to sink the Goeben and/or the Breslau. Points are also obtained for preventing these ships from entering the Dardenelles or the Atlantic. The French fleet must also pick up the three divisions of the 19th Corps from North Africa and transport them safely to Toulon, this operation being performed to a very strict timetable; the Allies gain points for each division landed before a certain time.

Victory conditions seemed to us to be pretty reasonably balanced. The one factor which can swing things dramatically one way or the other is the Italian navy; if they side with the Germans, the French ships are in real trouble, but if they side with the British, it is difficult for the Goeben to get anywhere in the western areas undetected. Most of the time, the Italians stay at home, this being determined by a SDR. Similarly the Austrians can enter the war on the German side, which could make the British job more difficult, particularly if they don't get the Italians; again, however, the Austrians usually stay at home.

Action itself is pretty primitive in handling, as one might expect from a strategic game. One merely rolls the die to determine the number of hits obtained, adjusting the die roll by a modifying number if a small ship fires on one larger. This simplicity is, in our opinion, quite in order for the game - a long drawn-out tactical-type engagement would change the emphasis of the game, and this doesn't seem necessary or even desireable; the game stands up well on its own merits.

There is plenty of interest in the play, although the mechanics are such that games take a relatively short time. I suppose the longest game we played lasted about two hours from start to finish. We thoroughly enjoyed playing the game - in fact we played far more games than were strictly necessary to write this report.

We would recommend it highly.

#### Some Unclear Situations.

As remarked above, the rules are, for the most part, easy to follow and to put into practice. However there are one or two minor points which perhaps need clarification.

First, it isn't quite clear just what part the Moltke plays. We think the Moltke only appears in the advanced game with a German Fleet SDR of 5 or 6.

Second, it has been mentioned above that the Germans get points for bombarding ports on the North African coast. However it isn't clear if they can do so before the 1500 August 5th turn, which is the time when Germans and British could start firing on each other. Note that at the start of the game, the French are at war with the Germans, but the British aren't. Also, it isn't clear whether these bombardment points can be obtained by pro-German Austrian or Italian ships. We think that any pro-German ship can get points for bombardment at any time; the French can't do anything to stop German bombardment early in the game, and hence the German can obtain a few points gratis. However this is probably a realistic situation built into the game, and is a cross the British have to bear. Shelling a town gives away a German position, anyway, so the German might think twice before doing it, even if the British can't fire.

One thing really mystifies us, although luckily it doesn't have much effect on the game. Normally speaking, the British respected the neutrality of the Italians, while the Germans didn't; this means, in terms of the play, that the Germans can sail through the straits of Bonifacio and Messina, and the British can't. This is fair enough. However the British player can pick a SDR to see if anyone in his chain of command 'has enough guts to chance violating Italian neutrality'. He must draw a 1 for this to happen, and continues drawing SDRs until he does so. However, at the foot of this rule (which so far has been perfectly clear) there appears the instruction: 'Must only have two SDR counters in play at a time for this.' What this means is beyond us. We assume that the British player may only make two SDRs for this purpose in the entire game, despite the ruling which says 'Beginning with the 12 noon turn, August 6th, before any movement is made, the British player may make a SDR each turn .....'. In other words, if we are correct in thinking he may only do this twice, but on turns of his choice, this means that the British get a one-in-three chance of being able to violate Italian neutrality. We hope we are right - if Dave Williams gets to read this, perhaps he can confirm (or otherwise) our judgement. Perhaps this also implies that the Italian neutrality can only be violated for the particular turn in question (i.e. the one in which the British player draws a 1, if at all); however this seems to be going a bit too far, and we think that the British can continually violate Italian neutrality once a 1 has been picked (if at all).

One final matter. As printed, the French transports have a speed of 1; a bit of counting reveals the fact that they cannot possibly get to North Africa, pick up the 19th Corps, and get back to Toulon again in the time required. Therefore, the speed of the French transports and escorts should be 2. This is confirmed by an announcement in a later issue of S&T.

#### Summary.

We think this is a very fine game - as good as any we have tested. It has many advantages, of which brevity is not the least important for wargamers with limited time for face-to-face play. It is simple in structure, yet sufficiently loaded with variables to make it quite a challenge for expert and novice alike. The designer is to be congratulated on a fine job - we are confident that this game will eventually prove popular.

Highly recommended.

#### Suitability for postal play.

All units are identified, and search areas etc. are already lettered, so there is no need for Letraset or an additional grid system. The play would have to be performed via a monitor, of course, for realism, although I suppose some reasonably workable method could be devised which eliminates the need for a monitor. However, in our experience, a monitor derives just as much pleasure from a game of this sort as the players.

We anticipate no difficulty at all with postal Goeben games, and think they will become popular. The game should have a particular attraction for those who like naval wargames, but who haven't time for the lengthy processes of Jutland or Midway.

Malcolm Watson. Don Turnbull.

Strategy And Tactics - a Report on Issue 22.

This issue is the usual 32 pages in length. The cover price is \$2.50; however potential subscribers will be pleased to know that the cost of a subscription doesn't work out to anything like this amount per issue, unless of course you have to pay a vast postage bill, as we do over in England. I think the idea of the high cover price is to encourage us all to take out subscriptions, rather than buying odd issues. Sorry - single issues; they are certainly not odd.

As usual, I will describe each article briefly, then produce some sort of a summary later on. The articles are, therefore, as below, dealing with them in order of appearance.

1. Outgoing Mail - the S&T Editorial. This section, although crammed with the right sort of information, will become a source of minor irritation to me soon, if I call my shots right. Whereas, in the past, the S&T editorial has been carefully composed, in English, recent examples indicate that a certain amount of needless informality, 'in' jokes, slang etc. is creeping in. Combined with this, the quality of the grammar has deteriorated.

The editorial in question, for instance, opens with 'Yeah' - perhaps a disappointing start to a magazine which, in many other respects, is highly professional. Later we are treated to other needless bits of slang - 'snafu', 'schmuck' are examples I see at themoment. And many sentences don't contain a verb or any of the professional and skilled pieces of writing we have come to expect.

Now, let me make this clear. I'm not carping just for the sake of it - there is a place for slang, for sentences which are deliberately badly constructed (for effect, one presumes) etc. However the editorial of the world's leading wargaming magazine is not one of them. No-one expects perfection from, say, ALBION (and, looking back in the files, I can see you haven't got it in any form); but S&T sells for a professional price, whereas ALBION doesn't.

Speaking of the editorial as purely a source of information, it is, of course, invaluable. Sometimes it gets over-laconic (for instance when the writer refers to the lack of Italian battleship counters in the tactical Goeben game in issue 21 as 'no big thing.' People who want to play the game will think otherwise, I feel). For the vast majority of the time, however, it informs the reader on a wide range of topics, and hence performs its function admirably.

2. Profile: Ne-109. By David Isby. The first of a series of S&T Profiles delving into the technical details of weapons etc. This article is lavishly illustrated and well-written, although I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the information, being more than normally ignorant in these matters. I would be interested to receive comments on this article by those who are competent to judge it.

3. The Renaissance of Infantry by Albert Nofi. The article introduces the main game enclosed with this issue - Tactical Game 14, which is the latest addition to the Tactical Game Series, and which was designed by Al Nofi.

The game itself will be reviewed in ALBION - next issue, we hope. However, let it be said here and now that the game components (the map, unit counters, etc.) are the mostbeautifully-designed examples of this sort of thing we have ever seen. Red Simonsen should take a bow here, and receive the congratulations of the entire ALBION staff.

The units involved in the various actions include longbowmen, crossbowmen, heavy and light cavalry, swordsmen, pikemen and others. Altogether a fascinating-looking game. I can't wait to get my hands on it.

4. Game Design - Panzerblitz. No author mentioned, but I think it is a Jim Dunnigan product. The article relates the history behind the initial development of Tactical Game 3 from early prototypes, and the subsequent development of the game into the latest Avalon Hill game, Panzerblitz. This in itself is a fascinating topic. However, the best is yet to come. The article ends by previewing the entire Panzerblitz rulebook, and by presenting a game, using some Panzerblitz counters (which are enclosed in sheet form, for mounting), the TAC14 map, and the Panzerblitz rules. To whet our appetite for the production of the game itself. And it certainly does that. Let me say here and now (and you know how prone I am to understatement) - this game looks magnificent.
5. If Looks Could Kill, by Redmond Simonsen. S&T decided that this was the time to release yet another venturesome project to wargamers. This one is the project known as GAGE (Graphic Analysis / Game Evaluation), and represents an attempt to bring to common nomenclature all sorts of game reviews, reports, etc. In other words, S&T are trying to standardise game reviews, and a darned good idea too. The details are too many for description here; however the idea looks good - very good - and I hope that we may persuade S&T to let us apply the GAGE technique to the games reviewed in these pages.  
The article includes three GAGE reviews (of Stalingrad, Kriegspiel and Barbarossa), plus 'essays' on these games which amplify the GAGE symbols. Although I cannot agree with everything in these essays (who said the Barbarossa campaign game only takes 6.3 hours to play? Try it! Now try it again, but thinking this time, as players normally do.), they illustrate exactly the factors on which a GAGE review depends.
6. Games by Sid Sackson. The regular column returns this time with an original solitaire card game. This one requires a considerable amount of skill and planning, and should be welcome to those who are fond of this sort of thing.
7. Diplomacy, by Rod Walker. This time Rod deals with rule ambiguities, such as the Gilliland Situation, The Coastal Crawl etc., some of which have already been covered in ALBION, and all of which have appeared in the main American Diplomacy magazines at one time or another. However, new Diplomacy players, and those who are only just being tempted to start the game, don't usually get large quantities of back issues of BLOB etc., so the article performs a very useful function.  
Rod also announces that a future issue of S&T will be another 'Diplomacy Special Issue' and outlines the articles we expect to see therein. Looks good.
8. Pass in Review. A good article covering books of interest to the wargamer. This time the subject is armoured vehicles. I still prefer Henry's style, though.....

9. Recon. A series of short articles introducing longer features planned for the future. This one is by Fred Vietmeyer, and deals with Napoleonic Organisation.
10. Incoming Mail - readers' letters. Marginally interesting this time. Some might find the letter from Tyrone Bomba offensive - I hope the S&T people put a stop to this sort of censor-tempting business soon.

On the whole, an excellent issue. One slightly irritating factor is the inclusion of many supplementary sheets, some of which should be in the magazine proper. It seems that they are sticking to a 32-page format, come hell or high water, so, if an article doesn't fit, it vanishes from the magazine and reappears on a supplementary sheet. Now, this isn't a bad idea purely for game rules, and it is essential presentation for game components, return questionnaires and the like, but it isn't suitable for articles, or rather bits of articles. The rush to get the issue out on time perhaps accounts for this, and in that case it is a small price to pay. But the filing system looks untidy! Weep!

As far as I am concerned, it is worth getting this issue for TAC14 and the preview of Panzerblitz alone.

Highly recommended - but take the slang with a pinch of salt.

xx

A SERIES WITHOUT A TITLE. By Michael Nethercot.

Being the first in an irregular series of articles which takes a less-than serious look at the design aspects of map-games.

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The British game designer (if indeed such an individual exists) must be more than a little dismayed by the deluge of new games overflowing from the Poultron Press establishment in New York City. Regular readers of this and Don Turnbull's other publications will already be aware of the existence of Avalon Hill's only serious competitor.

Unfortunately we (and by 'we' I mean those of us who are isolated on this rain-soaked patch, far from the hurly-burly of the wargamers' Mecca) only see things darkly, as through a New York smog, or Pacific Overcast. To us the mere sight of a hex grid sends a shiver of delight down our spine. How invigorating it must be to order a game one day and receive it by return of post!

I have the feeling that those of us who strive to conceive our own and dearly-beloved brain-child are labouring under a delusion - a false delusion. For in our wilder moments we see ourselves as the British Dunnigan sweating in some East Side basement, storming through a 1914 variant with one hand whilst playtesting Strategy I with the other.

For his sins, the author recently took out a subscription to S&T magazine only to find that his first two issues include no less than four complete games. Frankly, why bother to pay \$4 or £5 for a gaily-coloured box full of bits of cardboard, when for the same price one has the chance of receiving not one, but perhaps a dozen equally good, if not superior, products?

Which automatically makes one wonder how they do it. Yes - how do they do it? It can only be for love. Consider for a moment the sheer quantity of time expended on these designs, plus the high quality of the magazine itself. No-one in their right mind could possibly undertake

such an enterprise with any thought of financial reward!

Which introduction brings us to one of the games included in issue 20 of S&T. Called Bastogne. As the name implies, we are back in the Ardennes in the winter of 1944, not, however, with Avalon Hill. The two games on the subject (Bulge, of course, being the other) are as different as chalk from cheese. Whilst it is not my intention to attempt an erudite critique of either game (this being the province of Messrs. Turnbull and Watson - the 'Manchester Test Bed'), the embryo designer is advised to lock himself in his ivory tower for a couple of months and carefully strip Bastogne down until he can hear it tick.

To be honest I am not sufficiently conversant with the Test Series Games to know what is completely new about Bastogne, as against what has been developed or carried forward from earlier games. It contains so many original concepts (original for me, that is) that I feel rather like the young innocent who is picked up by a woman of the world.

Bastogne is, to coin a phrase, 'Hairy'. Real Steve Seabrook (a local Blues singer) style - not just down to the shoulders, but well below the kneecaps. It took me a whole weekend to mount and cut out the unit counters, then another couple of days to digest the rules.

Now, you will agree that it is difficult to assess a game without an opponent (why, Oh Why doesn't someone research into solo play?).

So, not having a wife or daughter (nuff said) who is an addict, I have to be more schizoid than usual, switching from one side of the table to the other - Stars and Spangles to the left, Crooked Cross to the right. With diligence and care, plus repeated glances at the rules and NOT allowing one's natural inclinations to over-rule the die, it is just possible to make a mechanical judgement on the basic game elements.

For a start, there are Zones of Control which aren't. Contradiction? Not on your life. Zones of Control affect movement, not combat. It costs movement factors to enter a zoc according to whether the unit is hostile or friendly. By the same token, it costs movement factors to land on the same square as a friendly unit. Combatwise, units can be adjacent, but not necessarily in combat. Neither does an attacker have to attack with all adjacent units, or the defender defend with all his units on a square which is under assault.

The idea of relating all terrain limitations to a numerical penalty is logical. Taking a unit having a movement factor of, say, 16, this unit can only move 16 squares in a particular impulse when it starts and ends its move on a road, and doesn't end up adjacent to a friendly or hostile unit. In Bastogne road movement is the norm - every other ground condition is covered at less speed.

To end one's turn on top of a friendly unit costs 3 movement factors, so stack-building is an expensive business. However anyone with first-hand knowledge of military convoys will agree that these penalties are, if anything, generous. Although the system may appear to be 'mind-bending', it is easier to follow than the 'double for road, one for plain terrain, half for rough terrain etc.' confabulations of Anzio etc.

In practice the movement rules permit greater freedom of manoeuvre than Bulge. In this respect I suggest that it is more historically accurate. A unit can skirt around an opponent - this did in fact happen in the densely wooded Ardennes countryside.

For the designer, the idea of 'charging' units a straightforward movement 'cost' is both elegant and realistic. It can be introduced into any land game regardless of period.

The miniature table-top fraternity are well versed in the die roll bonus/penalty combat resolution method. The idea is that a number is added or subtracted to or from the die roll when the attacker is in a specific advantageous or disadvantageous position. This is usually relative to the terrain situation of the defender or the morale state of the attacker.

In passing I would point out that the day will soon arrive when map games include rules covering morale, particularly those which simulate conflicts of the horse and musket era.

\*It has arrived already - TAC14 contains a number of morale rules. djt\* Bastogne includes an optional rule whereby one can add or deduct from the die roll instead of halving or otherwise altering the odds. This refinement allows a more graduated degree of effect. Obviously one has to spend a little more effort in preparing the CRT using this variation because the difference between individual throws is almost as important as the odds relationship.

If your Editor allows, I hope to be able to deal with CRT design in some future issue. This is an absorbing and fascinating subject, more often than not swept under the carpet by less discriminating critics. Returning to the point, Bastogne, besides the use of an impulse system for movement and combat control, also allows players to break down units into their subordinate commands. Hence the multiplicity of counters. When breaking down a unit the total of the combat factors of the subordinates is less than that of the parent formation. For example a 14 Fct Division becomes three 4 Fct regiments. But in some instances the movement factor of the lower order units increases.

One interesting sideline of this system is the effect it has on the concentration of fire power. To stop the German spearheads the Allied player is bound to fragment his divisional counters. In Bulge this is impossible, because the only units in play are at regimental level.

You can't extend your line by filling squares with battalions in Bulge - in Bastogne you can. On the other hand, the infiltration capacity of the attacker, due to the zone of control set-up, outweighs any apparent advantage to the defender. When one thinks about it, the increase in movement capability, coupled with loss of combat strength, is correct. Players may rebuild divisions by moving the requisite number of regiments on to the same square. I am not absolutely sure if the movement costs apply - perhaps the Manchester Test Bed will elucidate?

All good things must come to an end, and I hope that I have whetted your appetites to beg, borrow, or steal a copy of Bastogne. Better still, take out a sub to S&T - you will never regret it.

By the way, where's my copy of issue 22?????

Michael Nethercot.

\*I expect receipt of the copies of issue 22 soon - be patient. The movement cost does apply to units recombining; in fact some units may not recombine - they simply haven't the movement factor to do so! At least, this is the rule as written, although I gather that certain players have allowed the units in question extra movement to be used only for recombining purposes. We hope to play-test Bastogne soon. djt\*

A BRITISH IDIOT IN AMERICA.

Being the totally biased and inaccurate account of the three-week holiday in the U.S.A. made by the editor, his wife and four-year-old son.

Part ii. New York and New Jersey.

Starring: Bob and Carol Johnson.

Guest stars: Jim Dunnigan and S&T staff.

Oktay Oztunali, and wife.

Joe Seliga, wife and family.

Edi Birsan.

Tom Oleson.

Ted Holcombe.

Also appearing: Mr. Gosden.

Various New Yorkers.

Chorus: Residents of East 13th Street, New York City.

xx..

After the excitement of the previous day, we expected to awake late and to recover from our journey. Christopher obviously had other ideas, and bounded into our bedroom at 5 a.m. demanding breakfast, permission to play with the tortoise (called Bert, apparently - Bob hadn't questioned the animal on the matter previously) and many many dollars. Not necessarily in that order. He also demanded a weewee in a voice loud enough to awake Bob and Carol from their slumbers.

Bob had done a lot of work planning the day. We were to go first to the home of Carol's parents in Flushing, to deposit a change of clothes. We were then to take the subway into New York City, where we would see some of the sights. In the evening, we were to return to Flushing, put Christopher to bed, change, and return to New York to see something of the night life.

It is to Bob's eternal credit that he never once complained when we comprehensively wrecked the entire schedule. However that's later in the story.

The first part of the trip went according to plan. Bob drove us to New York, and promised us a magnificent view of the smog from afar, before we actually delved into it. However the New York Weather Bureau had obviously been warned of our arrival, and had failed to turn on the smog machine. Perhaps no-one put a quarter in the slot. Anyway, we reached a rise in the road, and the whole skyline of New York City was laid out before us, and completely smog-free! This was a really magnificent sight - like something out of a fairy-tale, for so long judged unattainable, suddenly coming true.

We paid a vast fee to enter the Lincoln Tunnel, then, suddenly, we were driving along Forty-Second Street. The Empire State Building, Times Square, Grand Central Station, the UN Building - all these things were there, and natural and normal.

Margaret tells me she didn't share the feeling I got when we actually hit New York City. To me, there is an indescribable atmosphere about New York which immediately makes you feel at home, and that New York is (as many people have said before) the best city in the world. To say that I was impressed, yet at the same time unsurprised, is both a contradiction and an understatement.

We drove out to Flushing, as planned, parked the car near the subway

station, and settled down to wait for a train.

Let me digress for a moment on the subject of subways. In London things are relatively peaceful - you are transported up and down escalators to well-marked platforms, distracted only by near-nude photographs of ladies adorning the walls, pretending to be advertisements. You can actually plan where you are going and how you are going to get there. When the train arrives, it does so at a sedate pace, and there is a fair degree of comfort on your journey.

Not so in New York. I don't know if the designer of the New York subway system was involved, at one time, with the Spanish Inquisition, but it is certainly an effective form of torture.

For a start, you have to be a genius to know how you are going to get to your proposed destination. Luckily for us, Bob is a genius. Had we to look at a subway map to decide our route, we would have finished up back in New Jersey, or Canberra, or the Denmark Strait. The subway map is the most complicated piece of mapmaking I have ever seen, and resembles vaguely the insides of a television set, as drawn by a moron with no artistic ability. Since there were originally a number of different companies operating on more or less the same routes, but by different tunnels, you need to be sure you are with the right company, so to speak, before getting onto a train, otherwise there's no telling where you might end up. Also the various lines at a station are much further apart than is the case in London, and I don't remember seeing any escalators.

Having found the right platform, you wait for the train to arrive. Which it does, at high velocity. Long before it stops, the doors open and people start fighting to get on, or off. Indeed, some don't seem to have made up their minds. You sit on a long, polished seat, which runs parallel to the axis of the train, and wait for it to start. When it does, it goes like hell immediately, and you slide down the entire length of the compartment on the seat which has been specially polished for that purpose. The noise is such that you can't hear your bones breaking, and the person next to you can't hear your screams. Speed limits are for the old world only, as are things like gentle gradients, shallow curves etc.

It is quite an experience.....

We got off at the corner of Central Park, at the intersection of Fifth Avenue and 59th Street. So far, Bob's schedule had run according to plan, but its doom was nigh.

You see, I had casually mentioned to Bob that I would like to have a look at a toy/game store in New York, and Bob had kindly re-arranged the schedule so that this would be the first item. He had allowed a generous three-quarters of an hour in the store, which seemed a very reasonable length of time to spend in one shop.

Near Central Park, on Fifth Avenue, is the F.A.O.Schwarz establishment, well known as one of the best toy stores in the world. We entered. Two hours later we left, Bob dragging me by the arm. We were all loaded from head to foot with parcels, and anyone who thinks generous Dad has spent all his money on Christopher doesn't know Dad. With the exception of some minor articles, the entire load of purchases was for me, and included a very fine-looking golf game I was anxious to get at soon. I spent much of the rest of the day reading game rules.

And Bob's schedule was shot to hell before we had even started! He was very nice about it though, and didn't swear at me. Much.

So it was loaded with parcels that we set off down Fifth Avenue, with Christopher racing around ahead of us looking at this and that, and generally getting in everyone's way. No-one seemed to mind, though; in fact, Christopher adapted amazingly well. We passed many places of interest on the way to lunch; we went into Tiffany's, for instance, and marvelled at the display and the fact that all the price tags were hidden carefully. We happened to see one price tag, partially exposed, for some tiny piece of bijouterie; the number of zeros took us out onto Fifth Avenue again, in some haste.

Bob was looking for Horn and Hardarts (a suitable lunch place) on 44th Street. However, after some searching, we found that some careless person had moved it to 45th without telling anyone. While at lunch, I bought half a pint of the latest innovation - draught beer - for around 5/-.

Now. Those of you who study economy might be interested in this bit. Sorry - economics, of course - it's too expensive to study economy nowadays. I was running rather low on cash at this point, having spent around £800 in F.A.O.Schwarz. We therefore sought a bank, wherein I could cash some traveller's cheques. Soon we could be seen stepping through the magnificent portals of the Franklin National Bank on 45th Street, between Fifth and Madison, and I was introduced to Mr. Gosden, he having drawn the short straw when it was realised that an Englishman was present.

I assumed my best English accent, and asked, in faultless tones, if my traveller's cheques could be changed into good solid dollars. Mr. Gosden smiled (cruelly, I recall, although it didn't strike me at the time) and consulted his file of known criminals. Apparently I wasn't included in the list of Well Known Drug Peddlars, International Currency Racketeers or White Slave Traders, so he asked for the documents in question.

Meanwhile Christopher had discovered a row of buttons on an adjacent desk, and was thinking about something.....

Mr. Gosden looked briefly at my passport photograph, and managed to suppress the outburst of mirth which usually followed that operation. He then looked at the book of traveller's cheques. He gravely opened the book, then recoiled in horror and fell on the floor in a dead faint. Two guards pinned my arms to my sides, while various employees threw water over Mr. Gosden and favoured me with some very unfriendly glances. Mr. Gosden recovered, and weakly propped himself into his chair.

Christopher took advantage of the commotion to press a couple of buttons and Carol and Margaret vainly tried to stop him. Phones rang in all corners of the bank.

Mr. Gosden held my traveller's cheque for all to see, and a gasp of horror ran through the assembled company. I innocently asked what the trouble was.

'Sterling' croaked Mr. Gosden, 'Sterling!'

'Yes' I replied. Quick with the repartee, that's me.

'We can't deal in Sterling!' croaked Mr. Gosden. 'We want traveller's cheques in dollars - you know, American Express.'

'When you come to England, I will change all your dollars into pound notes' I offered, not in much hope by now. Mr. Gosden ran his hands through his hair, fell forward onto his arms and wept loudly.

Christopher reckoned that now was the time to press another button. He didn't reckon with Carol's eagle eye, fortunately.

Bob intervened at this point. He apologised to Mr. Gosden for me, and asked politely if anything could be done. Meanwhile Christopher had found the drinking fountain, and the floor was under three inches of water. A kind female employee gave him a couple of peppermint sweets, which kept him quiet for a while.

Mr. Gosden finally relented, and attached himself to a telephone. He muttered down it for a while, casting frequent glances at me, perhaps hoping that I would turn out to be some figment of his imagination. After a chat with his superior, he finally gave me some cash, and we tottered out into the sunshine, reflecting on how difficult it was to sell Old England nowadays.

Bob now consulted his time-table, and from the wreckage we had caused managed to sort out a plan for the afternoon. We got on the subway again and rode to Battery Park, there to await a boat to Liberty Island. I got my camera at the ready.

Bob decided that, since he had already been up the Statue of Liberty a number of times, Carol could escort us. We joined the queue waiting for the lift, which apparently only held about 8 people at a time, and paid for our lift ride. The queue moved slowly, and before we had got half-way to the lift, Christopher demanded a weewee in a loud voice. I ducked under the rope with him, and went off searching for the right place. When we returned, Margaret and Carol were only a few yards from the lift, and I had quite a job persuading the man in charge of the queue that we had already paid and weren't just English queue-jumpers.

Christopher's incontinence now showed itself, and we were a few feet from the lift door when he once again expressed a wish to visit the smallest room. Courteously, and with true British manners, I let Margaret take him, under the rope and down the corridor again. The lift appeared, Carol and I boarded it, and we were whisked away to the observation gallery about half-way up the statue.

Carol asked me to shoot a panoramic view of New York with Bob's cine camera, so I adopted my well-known Jean-Luc Godard pose and commenced to shoot. A marvellous shot it would have been, too, if the film hadn't run out half way round, and before I got to the interesting bit. Margaret and Christopher rejoined us, having once again persuaded the man in charge of the lift queue that we had already paid, and that Christopher normally visited the smallest room once every five minutes. I think that fellow will remember us.....

We ate an evening meal at about seven o'clock in Chinatown, where we also bought one or two more souvenirs. I was also surprised to see the only curved street we had yet seen in the whole of New York City. Of course, by this time, Bob's timetable had been ruined again, but he had by now resigned himself to that fate.

Our last call of the day was to be at East 13th Street, to meet Jim Dunnigan and the S&T staff. Now, for the benefit of those who have not been down East 13th Street at night, let me say that it isn't the most salubrious area of New York City. Not quite. When walking down from Fifth Avenue (Bob had performed miracles to get us through the subway system again) we had the distinct impression that some anonymous person, armed to the teeth, was only biding his time before jumping us. It was with some surprise, therefore, that we reached the basement where Jim and his staff conduct their business.

It was about 9.30 p.m. before we emerged again, loaded even further with parcels of magazines, games etc. I will draw a veil over the actual basement itself, contenting myself with the remark that the S&T staff perform miracles in producing their magnificent magazines in such surroundings. Of course, the answer is that property, office space etc., is so expensive that an organisation is glad to get anywhere in which to operate at what we would call a normal cost. Anyway, Jim and his associates were very friendly and co-operative, telling us of this and that plan for the future, discussing possible ways of getting games and magazines over to England more cheaply and speedily. I could have spent a lot longer talking to Jim about game designs, but we had to drag ourselves away, since Christopher was showing signs of being tired (he had been awake 16 hours, and hadn't had much sleep for two days), while Margaret and I weren't exactly energetic. And so, after quite a day, we arrived back at Flushing at about 10.30 p.m. and had the chance to sit down, drink some marvellous beer, and watch the Miss New York contest on the tele. Carol's mother and father went out of their way to make us feel at home and welcome, and Liltabit (Bob's dog) kept Christopher awake.

Then back to New Jersey and bed.

.....

Saturday July 18th dawned early, with Christopher up and about as though nothing had happened the day before. I opened the golf game, only to find that they had not put the actual course in. That's about the same as buying a Stalingrad, but without the board. I cursed roundly, offending the tortoise.

The high spot of the day was the Diplomacy game, which brought some well-known names to Bob's apartment. Bob introduced me, in turn, to Edi Birsan, Joe Seliga, Tom Oleson, Oktay Oztunali and Ted Holcombe, and lots were drawn for the game. I was given first pick, and was suitably annoyed to find that I had picked Italy, much to the glee of all present. Edi was Austria, Bob France, Ted England, Oktay Germany, Joe Turkey and Tom Russia. Carol had prepared a marvellous array of food, so it was with full mouths and plates that we disappeared to all corners of the apartment and began to plot, much to the wild amazement of the wives present.

I will draw another veil at this point. Over the game itself. I disobeyed all the laws of hospitality by stabbing my host in the back, and Bob retired to a corner muttering about &\*@&'@'\* Englishmen who came 3,500 miles just to stab him. Apart from that, I won't mention the game. The result was a six-man draw, Russia being eliminated. Ted Holcombe didn't want a draw, and protested strongly for another move. However he changed his mind when everyone immediately started attacking him, and a draw was decided.

I survived, at least.

The company then broke up to play individual games - Oktay seemed to be participating in all of them, as far as I could see. Anyway, Tom and I sat in a corner drinking beer and talking about Anzio; we reckoned that one conflict was enough for one day. Oktay dropped in from time to time, mainly to explain to me his new idea for a German win in Battle of Britain. I adopted the usual Englishman's excuse in order to avoid being thrashed by Oktay in front of the assembled company.

Joe joined us shortly, having challenged Bob et AK and being soundly beaten for his part in the anti-France movement in Diplomacy. We talked about various AHIKS matters, drank good beer and ate good food. In this pleasant atmosphere the evening arrived, and with it the breaking up of the party, the various participants wending their way homewards. Agreed by all to have been a very good day indeed.

Bob and I drove back through Morristown to drop Ted Holcombe, and drove back to buy a good pizza, as if we hadn't eaten enough already that day. I should mention here that, although we in Britain might be said to have lost the art of eating, they haven't done so in America.

While we had been playing Diplomacy, Carol and Margaret had gone out shopping, and arrived back with a golf game. Not the same one as I had bought in F.A.O.Schwarz, in fact, but at least containing all the component parts. Bob and I had a round or two, Bob spending most of his time in lakes, rivers, streams and any other loose water he happened to find lying around. We found it to be a very good game, with only minor drawbacks, and resolved to have more games the next day.

Unfortunately, that evening, Christopher was sick - clearly the strain of the last couple of days had accumulated. Physically he was quite fit, but he just couldn't keep food down. This got him to bed early, for a change.

And eventually we followed, after an extremely enjoyable day.

.....

Sunday July 19th was a hot day. Nothing had been planned, and most of the day was spent in the apartment, taking things easy. Bob had thought of a picnic that day, but Christopher wasn't really fit, so we were able to relax and take a rest.

In the morning Bob took me to a local 'pitch and putt' golf course, where I surprised myself by playing reasonably well. When we got back, Bob set up the golf board game, and hammered me a number of times, so honours were even.

In the afternoon we watched television a bit, chatted a bit and drank rather more than a bit. In the evening Bob and Carol introduced us to a game called Yahtzee, which involves a certain amount of skill and five dice. We have since become enamoured of the game, and it is a fact that we have now played some 700 games since arriving home!

(N.B. - Bob - the St. George's Avenue House Record is now 522!)

An early night, in preparation for the trip to Buffalo on the morrow. And so to bed.

I am not going to embarrass all the fine people we met by waxing eloquent about their qualities. One thing must be said, despite their blushes, however - their warmth, generosity and hospitality could not have been bettered. You know what I mean, folks.

xx

In part iii of the series you will get:

HIJACKERS TAKE US TO BUFFALO!

THE DEWITT BASEMENT!

THE DEWITT EASY PAYMENT PLAN PAYS A DIVIDEND!!

NIAGARA FALLS!!!

ALLIES INVADE ITALY!!!

plus much more, and a new cast list of lovable characters.

LETTERS LETTERS

Note: There is nothing in this issue about the Walker-Tretick row. The letters that follow can therefore be read safely and without any risk of irritation. In fact, with any luck, the whole thing might have blown over by now.

In the case of letters which deal with a number of distinct topics, I reserve the right to interpose editorial comments in the body of the letter, indicated by \*..... djt\* You can try to break me of this nasty habit if you wish.

From Rod Walker, 5058 Hawley Blvd., San Diego, California 92116.

Dear Don,

ALBION 21 here the 19th. \*Wow! I hardly had my copy by then. djt\* Your new game (70/4) is 1970AY. .....

Before I start, may I ask what is the function of putting the starting position of a unit in parentheses? Dan Brannan used to put parentheses around the space the unit was in at the end of the season, but I'm not sure what you accomplish by what you are doing.

\*To be honest, Rod, I'm not sure myself. It just seemed a convenient way of distinguishing between source and destination - not that this isn't obvious anyway. I suppose it just satisfies my warped ideas of presentation. djt\*

Anyway, in the Spring '07 moves for 1969CF, you allow a Russian unit to be ordered by Italy. I would not have allowed this order. It seems to me that is the Italian player wants the Russian F BLA to do so-and-so, the Russian player still has to order it. On the other hand, if the Russian player says to his F BLA "obey the orders of the King of Italy",.... well, it's a sticky question, is it not? It is further complicated by the fact that Russia himself submitted no orders.

In sorting this thing out, the first place to turn is obviously the Rule-book. There is not much help there. Two things are clear: first, there is no provision whereby a player may turn control of one of his units over to another country; second, whenever the Rule-book speaks of a player giving orders, the implication is that he orders his own units and only those. There is at least one instance in which placing the units of A under the command of B is prohibited. When a player 'leaves the game', his units may not be turned over to another country, but must stand in civil disorder (although the preferred practice in both PBM and FTF Dippy seems to be to find another player, who does not already have units on the board, for the abandoned country).

On the other hand, we must ask ourselves (although I hate 'realist' arguments) whether it is unreasonable to suggest that a nation might on occasion order one of its commanders in the field to obey the orders of another (and foreign) commander. The known historical instances of this are legion. I myself was part of an American military unit under foreign command - although for reasons too numerous and too classified to go into here, the situation was not really that simple.

Therefore, were I GMing a game like 1969CF, and I got a set of Russian orders which read in part "F BLA follow Italian order", and an order from Italy which read F(BLA)-Arm, I would allow the move as you did.

One might argue that the Russian order is not one of the kinds of orders allowed by the Rulebook, but 'a badly written order, which nevertheless can have only one meaning, must be followed.' While I contend that this order is badly written, I think the Russian F BLA has gotten a valid order.

But that is not what happened in 1969CF in Spring '07, is it? Russia did not order F BLA to do anything, because he did not submit orders. What did happen is that Russia told you, some time prior to Winter '06, that (in effect) "the fleet in this present location is to follow Italian orders". I think the validity of this sort of order is open to question. The Rulebook implies, rather clearly, that each unit must receive a separate order during each movement season. A perpetual order of this sort is something which the Rulebook not only fails to provide for, but seems to prohibit. However, if Russia's moves continued to omit mention of that fleet, one might construe the omission as permission for Italy to order the thing. And it might well be within the prerogative of the GM to accept such orders (I would not, personally, accept any sort of perpetual order).

Again, however, this is not entirely what happened in 1969CF. In this case, Russia submitted no orders to his other pieces. The question which must be asked is, what does this mean?

The Rulebook says that a player may order 'all, some or none' of his units. It also says what happens when a player 'leaves the game'. In FTF Diplomacy, it is easy to tell if Herkimer Vandersnoot has walked off in a huff or is just sulking in a corner, and rule accordingly. But when no orders come in for a postal game, do you rule that the player has merely ordered none of his units or has left the game? You obviously rule that he has chosen to order none of his units - otherwise you would have annihilated the two dislodged Russian units. I would have ruled that the two units were annihilated and that the Italian order to F BLA was invalid. The basis of this ruling would be the fact that Russia had not written me saying, 'I order none of my units.'

This all leads to an interesting problem. What if it should come to pass that John Robertson does as John Munro (England, 1969BG) did; namely, cease to submit orders altogether? At no point did you rule that Munro had left the game, although it is pretty obvious that that is what he did. It made no practical difference in 1969BG. However, should you fail to so rule in 1969CF (should it become necessary to make such a ruling), the practical consequence would seem to be that the Russian southern fleet will become an Italian unit until removed under the automatic removal rules. This does not seem to be a felicitous arrangement, and I think it entirely contrary to the spirit and intent of the Rules (although I would be hard put to find some specific rule).

Anyway, I would like to know your thoughts in this (either by letter or in print, preferably both and preferably the latter if only one of them). It is an interesting and perhaps important question. It seems to me essential that a Gamesmaster must, at some point, rule that a player who is failing to send in orders has 'left the game' (whether temporarily or permanently).

Next NUMENOR will be very late. No time, No time, No time (this is a recording).

Best, Rod.

\*Well, here's a pretty state of things. The situation is rather complicated, and in fact is further influenced by the severe reprimand I have received from the Italian player, who swore at me for making public the news that the arrangement between he and Russia existed.

Let's look at the facts, then, now the matter is out in the open. First, I think Rod may have assumed that the Russian player didn't submit retreat orders for the Spring 1907 retreats. He did, in fact, do so. If nothing else, this indicates that he is still partially active.

In the Russian orders for Autumn 1906 there was the note 'my fleet at present in the Black Sea, or going there this time will be under Italian orders until further notice'. Now I agree with Rod that I don't like perpetual orders of this type, and in fact will allow it to happen once only unless confirmation, either positive or implied by the omission of the unit in question from orders, arrives for each succeeding move. I was therefore prepared to allow it to take place for Spring 1907, and no more unless it was re-confirmed.

When John Robertson failed to submit builds at the year-end my heart started to go pit-a-pat. It went even pit-a-pat-er when he also missed the Spring 1907 orders, since I couldn't move the unit in question without revealing how it was that John had ordered one unit to move, but had omitted to order the rest, i.e. the agreement in question between Russia and Italy. Normally I wouldn't reveal such an arrangement.

I knew why John had failed to submit orders, of course - he was up to his eyes, nose and throat in the arrangements for the Table-toppers convention in Dundee; he has since asked he to phone him reversed charges should a deadline arrive without any Russian orders. So I knew that he was still participating in the game, and felt free to interpret that he simply wasn't moving his units that time, rather than dropping out.

So, I had either to let the unit stand, in contradiction to what I had been told to do, or let the cat out of the bag, and the miaow from Malcolm Watson convinced me that, for one player at least, I had made the wrong decision. Actually, I think I made the right one as far as the game was concerned.

There is another reason for saying this. You may remember that, way back in the history of ALEION, we revealed that we had found a copy of the American Diplomacy rulebook (sent by Dieter Cordes, in fact) and that certain details appeared in the American version which don't appear in those published over here. Now, I may be wrong about this, but I'm as certain as I can be that one of the missing sections was concerned with those who drop out of the game half-way through. Hence the fact that ALBION has never even considered replacement players, or distinguishing between units in civil disorder and those ordered to stand, except for the 'no orders received' addition. By the way, I have lent my rules to John McCallum, so can't tell at present whether the British version does mention replacement players, units in civil disorder, or whatever. I hope my memory serves.

So the situation stands as follows. John Robertson must submit orders for his units next season, and either omit mention to me of F(Arm) (from which I will assume the order is still in force) or positively state that it is still under Italian control. If he fails to submit

orders, I will raise his telephone bill by some notches and get his orders that way, anyhow. I think you will agree, Rod, that the situation seems reasonably clear and equitable in this case; however, please don't think I am disputing the validity of your statements - it's never easy to know what is happening if the domestic situation isn't revealed. And in my ignorance, I have always regarded the ordering of a unit by the commander of another country as perfectly legal, providing both parties tell me about it, when it should stop, etc. etc. I hate this type of arrangement anyway - makes gamesmastering too complex for my feeble mind. It certainly is a question on which we need some sort of uniform agreement, particularly if the 'regularity' of the game is in question.

Many thanks, therefore, for the letter, Rod, and the interesting arguments therein. djt\*

From Bill Heim, 27964 Edgecliff Way, Hayward, California 94542.

Dear Don,

Greetings from California! How are things in Merry Old England? I just wanted you to know that I have enjoyed reading ALBION. You are doing an excellent job - please keep up the good work!

I was extremely pleased to see that you are gradually broadening your horizons into the world of Avalon Hill type wargaming, military history etc., as these subjects are of keen interest to me.

In this connection, I want to mention that great article on Stalingrad by Ken Norris.....\*section omitted here dealing with Bill's defeat in the first game of a Stalingrad match djt\* In the return match, I took the Germans, and, prior to the game, happened to read Ken Norris' article in S&T magazine. By using the principles advocated by Ken, and following his advice to the letter, I was able to surround and destroy most of the Russian army while keeping my losses surprisingly low. It just goes to prove that you British were certainly not behind the door when the brains were passed out!

\*Many players have said the same to me about the Stalingrad article. The only person against whom it doesn't seem to work is Ken himself - witness the thrashings I have received at his hands before reading the article, after reading it once, after reading it twice, and after learning it by heart. djt\*

In your July 15th issue of ALBION, I was especially interested in Michael Nethercot's thoughts on multi-commander games. He has definitely given a lot of in-depth thought to the subject - apparently more so than the rest of us.

I had been trying to drum up enough interest for a multi-commander pbm game within AHIKS for some time, but always with little chance of success. Recently the situation has improved. Bob Johnson has delegated Glen Hertz to organise such a game among the members, and he has received an adequate response. I have also been compiling a list of people who have indicated an interest in participation.

Although my exposure to philosophy and related studies is quite limited, the concept of 'man working in concert for the achievement of a common goal' has always appealed to me as a very worthwhile ideal. This is in evidence in any productive group effort, even the interplay of a well-organised pbm multi-commander game! I suppose that is one of the chief attractions of the game. I have always enjoyed being a member of

an efficient team that operates like a well-oiled machine - that is why I'm so enthusiastic.

To judge from Michael's article, you people are actually ahead of us in respect to mechanics of play etc. I would like to exchange ideas with you on all aspects of multi-commander pbm games, including the feasibility of a game between British and American teams. In order to stimulate interest, I requested Ted Holcombe to mention this to you; since then I have heard that he has brazenly worded it as a direct challenge! Although Ted meant well, I consider his action rather impulsive and a bit premature. It would, however, be quite interesting if we could manage to choose a game, agree on the ground rules, and have a go at it - just on a trial basis, if you wish. It would be a pleasure to beat the British again.....!!

Assuming that your reply will be favourable, and because I don't write as often as I should, I am taking the liberty of submitting a few ideas of my own concerning multi-commander games, for your evaluation:

1. I strongly agree that the game be based on a well-known historical campaign, as Michael stated.
2. As a giant step towards realism, I urge the incorporation of the 'stack fights as a stack' rule. In other words, the attacker must fight a stack of defending counters as one unit. He cannot divide combat into more than one battle. This rule is already used in some of the later AH games - Bulge, Anzio etc.
3. In conjunction with the above rule, I suggest the use of a modified combat results table, in order to keep casualties within a moderate level and to encourage more attacks.  
Thus, the Stalingrad CRT could be used, but the individual results modified to cut losses.  
A elim. Attacker loses largest unit and retreats remaining units two squares.  
D elim. As above, but applied to the defender.  
Exchange. Defender loses his smallest unit (in defence factors) and retreats remaining units two squares. The attacker must match the loss with attack factors, single or double depending on terrain.
4. The attacker should have the option to occupy a square vacated by the defender (as a result of combat) in the same turn, and regardless of terrain type.

These rules can usually be applied to any AH battle game, with little complication. The result will be more battles, less losses - thus diminishing the luck factor and stressing the judicious application of strategy and tactics for a victory.

This offer is made only as a guide, and as food for thought. Any comments or suggestions would be greatly appreciated (I assume Michael will be consulted).

Hoping this finds you in good health and spirits.

Your friend, Bill.

P.S. I have a D Day variant called Westwall '44 which can be used for a multi-commander pbm match. The order of battle lists extra units for the Germans, and the 'Holcombe' version of strategic bombing is substituted for the regular rule. I can send you a copy of the rules if you like.

In the final analysis, I suppose a 'Barbarossa-type' version of Stalingrad lends itself best for multi-commander play because of the profusion

of division-sized units. As you had pointed out in a previous issue, four years for playing time precludes its feasibility. However, perhaps one- or two-year portions of the campaign can be utilised. Either a D Day, or Stalingrad, or a Bulge variant are preferred, so long as they are not weighted down with excessive complexities. Bill.

\*Although this appears in the letter column, it might well have been an article in its own right. Many thanks, Bill, for taking the trouble and time to write at such length in response to Michael's article. I had better take your questions from the start. I heard from Ted Holcombe, of course, and wilted slightly at the challenge he wrote. Everyone seems to want to beat the poor old British nowadays! In fact, being serious for a change, I think that such games should be encouraged as much as possible, within and outside AHIKS - it's that sort of hobby, after all, and the Diplomacy people caught onto the idea of collective 'camaraderie' a long time ago, thus providing the basis for many many friendships (a few permanent enmities too, but that can't be helped). As far as this particular challenge goes, the issue is in the hands, initially, of the members of AHIKS over here, and this challenge has already been announced in the regional news section later. In other words, I think we might have a game, providing players aren't already too busy.

The history of multi-commander pbm games is chequered, to say the least. In my limited experience, I heard of vast schemes - ARDENEX, for instance, and a Stalingrad variant of some sort - which seem to have folded. I guess that the reason for this was the complexity of the rules, and hence agree completely with Bill in his request for simplicity.

Your suggested amendments to the rulings deserve individual comments. My views are below, but I hope other readers will write in and let me know how they feel.

1. Agreed absolutely.
2. This surely depends, in the final analysis, on the size of a hexagon. In Bulge, the hexagon represents a small enough area for this rule to be valid, but I'm sure that isn't the case with the AH Stalingrad. To my mind, in a case such as Stalingrad, you either a) accept the rule as written, b) make a larger board so that the hexagons represent less area (much less!) in which case you can accept the modification, or c) adopt the S&T Barbarossa ruling which prohibits more than one unit per square.
3. As a means of producing more die rolls in a game, I am all for this. However, in many respects, I prefer an ANZIO-type step reduction CRT. However this brings in its train a lot more units, so it may not be all that good for multi-commander games.
4. Depends a lot on 3 above. I'm not quite sure about this rule as standard, although it has many merits.

Everyone - please feel free to comment on Bill's suggestions and my comments. Particularly Michael Nethercot, who seems to have got himself voted into a job here ..... hard lines, Michael!

I know Michael is interested very much in rules for new games. If you were to send him a copy, Bill, I'm sure he would be pleased.

Mind you, the proof of the pudding ..... I think it would be wise to reserve final comments and decisions until after the face-to-face multi-commander game to be played at the AHIKS British region meeting in a few weeks time. Watch this space....! djt\*

Extracts from Questionnaires.

You will all remember that, instead of the usual cartoon, (or whatever), we had a questionnaire on the back page of the last ALBION. Some replies have come in (I had expected more, as it happens - why do you all think I sent overseas copies airmail???, Grrrr...), and I give below extracts of the comments therein, in cases where these are in any way relevant to editorial policy.

Edi Birsan: 'a split in the zine usually knocks up postage cost - are you ready for such a rise? The Courier isn't a bad name.....'  
\*I agree that postage costs will rise - even before they go up by normal means, as they are due to do in February 1971. This means that game fees might increase slightly, but not actual subscriptions, since all subscribers pay their own postage under the new system anyway. Since the last ALBION was printed, it has come to my attention that there is already a magazine called The Courier, which deals mainly with table-top wargames, I gather. So my title COURIER can stand, I think (sorry Colin - your title), particularly since it is a sub-zine of ALBION, and not a zine in its own right. djt\*

Rod Blackshaw: 'next time there is a questionnaire please do not use it as a back cover for ALBION - put a blank page at the back to protect the drivel therein.'

\*A good point - apologies to all. Some people have already replied on a separate piece of paper, since they want to preserve the entire ALBION. Can't think why. For instance..... djt\*

Ray Evans: 'I hope you don't mind if I type down the answers to the questionnaire in ~~ALBION~~ ALBION on this piece of paper, as I would like to keep the ALBION intact as much as possible (for posterity).'

Rod Walker: '.....I'll keep the original of the questionnaire for my files..... The monthly collection of ALBION/COURIER will be just fine. I think you might consider making the margins more narrow. They are very wide now, and unless your machine won't work on narrower margins, you could increase by  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  the amount of material you can get per page.'

\*The original idea of the wide margins was to allow for people filing ALBION in ring binders. See how thoughtful we get. However it is a fair comment on my intelligence that it never occurred to me to think of one wide margin only - the one which would be punched out for filing. You will have noticed that I am trying this 'off-set' idea this time, and hope it helps. However I still wonder how the devil I have got to page 23, even with the extra space available. djt\*

Tony Jones: 'A Great Goofy Mag. with lots of interesting reading. I wish you well for the future. What about reports on the Test Series Games in progress to help people pick up games, plus a rules forum to standardise rules?'

\*I like the idea in principle, but don't want to extract interesting reading from the AHKS regional bulletins. Since most people get both, however, the purpose will be served by keeping such reports in the bulletin section. Anyone with comments on in-progress Test Series Games is welcome to submit a report. Goofy??? How dare he? Stupid, yes, but I'm not sure about Goofy..... djt\*

Eric Slack: 'It's fine - just keep it coming and keep it growing.'

\*Funnily enough, ALBION is currently at the stage when articles submitted or prepared for one issue have to be left until the next, for reasons of lack of space. It's the first (and probably the last) time this situation will prevail. Nice to think about, though. djt\*

Dennis Nixon: 'As a new boy I will await the first issue of COURIER.'

Many thanks to the above for their comments, and also to Michael Nethercot, Jeremy Elsmore and one other whose form has mysteriously disappeared, for their return of the questionnaire.

Arrrghhh! Another one which I missed.

Colin Newcombe: 'Concerning the reports on the Test Series Games, would not a report be more valid after game-testing by more people? I have in mind four or five pairs of players, who could test each game at monthly intervals, then submit a report. Each report would then be coalesced into a composite report on the game, with many more points of view available.'

\*Quite right, Colin. The only trouble is the lack of copies of the games in this country. In most cases I have the only copy - even for the most popular game - Normandy - there are only about four copies in England, yet the report was done some time ago. What we aim at in the reports is a 'first impression', which might allow prospective purchasers of the game to get some idea of what they could buy before actually paying their cash. Indeed, in some cases, time would not allow us to test a game fully - to attempt to play all the variations on Deployment, for instance, would demand more time than available. Nevertheless, we welcome reports from other players of the Test Series Games, particularly if they bring to light an area in the rules o' play which hadn't been encountered in our tests. djt\*

xx

#### ALBION back issues.

As you know, certain copies of back issues of ALBION are not available. These comprise issues 1,3,4,5 and 11, although stocks on some other issues is running low. The time will come, I assure you, when such out-of-print issues will be made available by photo-copy; however the expense of such an operation dictates that the demand must be quite high, otherwise I would be forced to charge a totally unrealistic price for the copy.

Orders for back issues will therefore be taken on strict priority. At present, the list is as follows:-

Bernie Ackerman. Issues 1,3,4,5.

Dennis Nixon. Issues 3,4,5.

Jeremy Elsmore. Issues 1,3,4,5,6,11.

First come, first served, folks. Get your orders in now.

#### Questionnaires.

While I remember, and have a bit of spare space, please may I ask everyone to send me their questionnaire answers. All except for the above-mentioned, that is, whose contributions have been welcomed.

ALBION Trades and Subscribers List.

Symbolism as last issue. Figures accurate before mailing this issue.

1. Michael Nethercot, 20 Moray Close, Rise Park, Romford, Essex.  
S. (£2-1-9d).
2. Malcolm Watson, 3 Hawthorn Avenue, Timperley, Cheshire.  
P. \*0\*
3. Colin Newcombe, 115 Longdown Road, Congleton, Cheshire.  
S. (13/10d).
4. John Robertson, Upper Dunglass, Arbroath Road, Broughty Ferry,  
Dundee DD5 1QN. P. \*4/2d\*
5. Chris Hancock, 17 Mallard Road, Chelmsford, Essex.  
P. \*8/4d\*
6. David Wood, 60 Woodgate Avenue, Church Lawton, Stoke on Trent  
ST7 3EF, Staffs. P. \*0\*
7. Rod Walker, 5058 Hawley Boulevard, San Diego, California 92116.  
TA. (5/4d).
8. John McCallum, P.O.Box 52, Ralston, Alberta, Canada.  
T.
9. Jeff Key, 4611 N. Pennsylvania, Apt 1-D, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma  
73112. T.
10. Dick Holcombe, 233 Orange Street, Oakland, California 94610.  
TA. (-19/9d).
11. Ray Evans, 12 Mareth Road, Bedford, Bedfordshire.  
P. \*£1-3-6d\*
12. Bob Johnson, P.O.Box 134, Whippany, New Jersey 07981.  
TA. (-£1-9-4d).
13. Don Miller, 12315 Judson Road, Wheaton, Maryland 20906.  
T.
14. Bob Thomas, 155 Coxford Road, Shirley Warren, Southampton SO1 6JX.  
P. \*2/6d\*
15. Bob Stuart, 3 Millwood Road, Orpington, Kent.  
P. \*5/9d\*
16. Eric Slack, 26 Hartcroft Road, Bestwood Park Estate, Nottingham  
NG5 5JF. S. (12/5d).
17. Sheila Minion, 7 Beeley Close, Allestree, Derby DE3 2PY.  
S. (-4/11d).
18. Charles Wells, 3021 Washington Boulevard, Cleveland, Ohio 44118.  
S. (£1-4-3d).
19. Terry Kuch, 7554 Spring Lake Drive, Bethesda, Maryland 20034.  
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20. Larry Fong, 704 Alice Street, Oakland, California 94607.  
S. (-£1-4-1d).
21. Edi Birsan, 48-20 39th Street, Long Island City, New York 11104.  
P. \*5/5d\*
22. Bill Heim, 27964 Edgecliff Way, Hayward, California 94542.  
S. (£1-17-7d).
23. John Lilley, 112 Croydon Road, Reigate, Surrey.  
S. (£1-14-1d).
24. Buddy Tretick, 3702 Wendy Lane, Silver Spring, Maryland 20906.  
P. \*11/1d\*
25. Fred Davis, 5307 Carriage Court, Baltimore, Maryland 21229.  
S. (14/8d).

26. Richard Redd, K'vutzat Urim, Doar Na Negev, Israel.  
P. \*£1-19-10d\*
27. Rod Blackshaw, 24 Oak Cottages, Styal, Wilmslow, Cheshire.  
S. (3/10d).
28. Bernie Ackerman, P.O.Box 6, Daggafontein, Transvaal, South Africa.  
P. \*£1-7-8d\*
29. David Jones, 4/58 Deveron Drive, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire.  
P. \*4/7d\*
30. Allan Calhamer, 321 W. Calendar Avenue, Kensington Apartments  
2E, La Grange, Illinois 60525. A.
31. Jim Dunnigan, Poultron Press, P.O.Box 396, New York City, New  
York 10009. A.
32. Tony Jones, 32 Saxon Close, East Preston, near Worthing, Sussex.  
S. (£1-1-0d).
33. Ian Erskine, 46 Carnlough Road, Cabra, Dublin 7, Ireland.  
S. (2/-).
34. Bob McLaughlin, Hickory Farms, 3 Parole Plaza, Annapolis, Maryland  
21401. S. (-10/4d).
35. Dennis Nixon, 49 Manor Street, Middlesbrough, Teesside TS1 4EV.  
S. (£1-10-0d).
36. Omar DeWitt, 78 Wickham Drive, Williamsville, New York 14221.  
S. (-6/2d).
37. Harry Tucker, 22 Salisbury Road, Seaford, Sussex.  
S. (1/-).
38. Henry Radice (Lt. Col., M.B.E.), G Branch, HQ Northern Command,  
York YO1 4AU. S. (-4/-).
39. Jeremy Elsmore, 3 The Gorse, Tabley Road, Knutsford, Cheshire.  
S. (14/-).
40. Joe Seliga, 15 Windswept Drive, Trenton, New Jersey 08690.  
S. (-2/-).
41. David Karfoot, 9 Mountbarrow Road, Ulverston, Lancashire.  
S. (-2/-).

41 on the list now - how about that????

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A few things seem to have been pushed out of this issue for lack of space. Next time, with luck. Actually, just to bring the colour back to your cheeks, here is advanced notice of some of the tripe issue 23 will contain.

Yet more of A British Idiot in America. Malcolm Watson on 1969CF.

Game Theory. Anzio Beachhead.

A Grand Revelation About Malcolm Watson (you just can't afford to miss it).

Tactical Game Fourteen  
and more!

Keep the comments, letters and cash rolling in. Particularly cash.....

Don Turnbull, 6 St. George's Avenue, Timperley, Cheshire, England.

AHKS. British Region Members' Bulletin Number 17.

Bulletin Page 1.

I don't think anything will be enclosed with this bulletin, unless David Wood asks me to distribute directions to the regional meeting, or ashtrays or something. Of course, most of you will get a lump of ALBION tacked on at the front.

It is my normal custom to start each bulletin with a welcome to any new members who have joined us during the month. However this time I will put this news later in the issue. Why? Well, I know there are two new members, and negotiations are proceeding with a third potential new member, so I would like to get the situation clear in order to announce them all at the same time.

So, on we go to a regular, and popular, feature.

The Colonel's Corner. By Henry Radice.

To return to biography, and a bit more on the first of the British war heroes - one of those who bore the heat and burden of the early days - Field Marshal Lord Wavell. Two books of the mid-40s are Wavell by R.H. Kiernan (Harrap 1945, 6/-), and Wavell by Maj. Gen. R.G. Collins (H&S 1947, 25/-). Both were written before papers and documents had been made available for study. The first is a superficial work and hardly worth buying; the latter is a military biography of the year of battle from June 1940 to June 1941, and the nine - yes, nine! - campaigns which Wavell conducted in that period. Maj. Gen. Collins is quite a well-known military writer. Good library reading.

Eight Years Overseas 1939-1947 by Field Marshal Lord Wilson of Libya (Hutchinson 1950, 25/-).

While he never held the centre of the stage, Lord Wilson could be described as the chief supporting actor of the British side throughout the Middle East campaigns. He held many important posts - GOC Troops Egypt, Military Governor of Cyrenaica, Commander of the Land Forces in the Greek and Syrian campaigns, Commander 9th Army, CinC PAIFORCE, CinC Middle East after Alexander took over 18 Army Group, and finally Supreme Commander. He finished the war as head of the British Joint Service Mission in Washington.

This book is full of interest and excellent reading. He describes the many and serious problems he had to grapple with, he admits to his own mistakes and, while he does not hesitate to criticise, he is never malicious. His nickname 'Jumbo' was typical of the man - big physically and in every way. He also did not lack the common touch. One delightful story is that when, during the evacuation from Greece, the ship due to carry him failed to turn up, and those around him asked what he would do, he replied "I shall do what many British soldiers have done before me - sit on my kit and wait."

Strongly recommended.

Tony Jones has written to me to say that a book which I mentioned in the July-August newsletter 'With Rommel in the Desert' by H.W. Schmidt, is available in Panther Books at 5/-. He describes it as very readable, giving good action reports of the desert battles. Thank you, Tony, for filling in a gap.

I am rapidly running out of sand now, and the next two months should see us out of the desert. Here are some suggestions for reading of the lesser-known works, both biography and autobiography.

In several cases I know little of the merits of the books, but the fact that they have appeared in the RUSI lists means that they must have something of value and interest to say.

To start off with, two biographies (the first an unofficial one) on that legendary figure Lord Freyberg VC. Lord Freyberg, a First World War VC and hero continued in the same vein throughout the Second.

Nicknamed 'the salamander', it must be a close-run thing to decide whether or not he was the most wounded man in the British Army. In winning his VC, Lord Freyberg was wounded four times, once severely, over two days of continuous conspicuous gallantry.

No book on such a man could be dull. Commander of Second New Zealand Division and of the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, he later became a Corps Commander, and finished his days as Constable of Windsor Castle - a just reward from his Sovereign to one of Her most gallant and famous subjects.

The books are General Lord Freyberg VC by Peter Singleton (Michael Joseph 1963, 25/-), and Freyberg VC The Man 1939-45 by Maj. Gen. Stevens (Jenkins 1966).

Playing With Strife by Lt. Gen. Sir Phillip Neame VC, KBE, CB, DSO (Harrap 1947, 15/-). A straightforward account of a full and adventurous life in both peace and war by a gallant soldier. An early VC of the First World War, he had no luck in the Second. He held a high operational staff appointment on Lord Gort's GHQ in the 1940 BEF. He went to the Middle East in August 1940 as GOCinC Palestine, Transjordan and Cyprus. In February 1941 he succeeded Sir Henry Maitland Wilson to the Cyrenaica Command. Stripped of all necessities to conduct mobile operations in the desert in favour of the Greek Campaign, allotted under-equipped and untried troops, he was soon faced with Rommel's daring irruption. He had the ill-fortune to be captured with General O'Connor during the retreat near Derna.

Recommended as supplementary reading.

Blaney by John Hetherington (F.W.Cheshire, Melbourne 1955, 16/-). This biography of the greatest soldier so far produced by Australia, attempts to portray the man rather than the soldier, but fails to do justice to either. A controversial figure, unattractive as a man, unpopular with his own Australians, ruthless and uncompromising, he was none the less a fine soldier. Wavell described him as 'probably the best soldier we had in the Middle East - positive, firm and a very successful commander.' Commander of the 1st Australian Corps in Greece and Syria, he later became Wavell's deputy. Recalled to Australia as CinC, he was by 1945 almost a military dictator.

Difficult to obtain, but recommended.

The Desert My Dwelling-Place by Lt. Col. D. Lloyd-Owen DSO, OBE, MC. (Cassell 1957, 18/-). The author, now a Maj. Gen., gives an interesting description of his experiences as a patrol leader in the Long Range Desert Group. Formed in 1940, the nucleus was a band of enthusiasts who had spent their leave in the fleshpots of Cairo, but exploring the Libyan Desert. There is a good description of the men, the qualities and skills needed, the organisation, command and control system. The tasks included deep reconnaissance, road watching and counting enemy vehicles (an unpopular job requiring great patience), offensive action, insertion of agents and saboteurs. There is a description of the raids on Tobruk and Benghazi in September 1942, which both ended in failure.

Bulletin Page 3.

There are good descriptions of places, life in the desert, and people involved. There is a sketch map and index plus eight pages of illustrations.

A good buy. Recommended.

Henry Radice.

New Naval Wargame Rules.

I had a roughly off-set letter through the mail the other day which opened 'Dear Friend'. This didn't put me in a receptive mood to start with - too many Pools firms write in the same way - indeed anyone who wants my hard-earned cash. However further perusal revealed that this particular letter might have something useful in it, so I thought I would let the region know.

(It strikes me at this point that everyone in the region might have had similar letters, the writer having somehow got hold of a list of 'prominent wargamers', among whom would naturally appear all the AHIKS members. If you've had one of these, ignore the next bit). The letter is from one Arnold J. Hendrick, who modestly announces 'the rules ..... were written by the most experienced player of the game (mainly me).'

However, leaving aside this flummery, which should never appear in letters of this nature, it seems that the rules might be of interest to those attracted towards naval wargames. No dice are used - the player completely controls manoeuvre of his ship, firing torpedos and guns etc. Yet the rules are apparently very simple! This is something of a contradiction in terms, to my biased eye. The basis of the 'damage account' is the Fletcher Pratt system, which isn't the most simple thing ever invented (although it is a darned good system, or so I am assured).

With the equipment provided you can fight either the River Plate or the Denmark Strait. At least the designer has kept to actions which involve only a few ships, so you don't need to hire the nearest Mecca to play the game in. Playing time is about 2 hours. It strikes me that there may be some interest here, so those of you who want a copy of these rules should write to:-

Arnold J. Hendrick,  
10 Cole Road,  
Wayland,  
Mass. 01778.

The price is \$2.50 per set, plus around 30¢ extra for airmail.

I haven't yet decided whether or not to send for a set myself - the cash question isn't the most healthy of the Turnbull aspects at the moment. However, I would be grateful if anyone who buys a set would write a short account of the rules and play etc. for the bulletin. Oh yes - the ship deck-plans supplied are 1:1200 scale. This is standard, I think - David will correct me if not.

Best wishes to John Robertson.

As I write this, the date on the Scottish calendar before me reminds me that this weekend is THE weekend for Dundee Wargames Club - the weekend of the Annual Table-Top Wargames Convention in the British Isles. Our best wishes go to John Robertson, who has had the unenviable task of organising the affair. Hope it all goes right, John!

The Regional Meeting.

Looks like we are going to have a record turn-up for this meeting; at the last count, the total number of members intending to come was 12, with some members not having yet returned the form to David.

Those you may expect to see are: Harry Tucker, Henry Radice (with Slasher), Tony Jones, Michael Nethercot, Ken Norris, Bob Stuart, Eric Slack, Carl Eley, Malcolm Watson, Chris Hancock, David Wood and myself. I think John Poole intends to come, and also Bob Thomas and Sheila Minion - would they please confirm with David? Others can't make it, unfortunately; however we hope to see them at a future meeting.

David remarked to me that no less than five people had expressed a keen desire to be met by a blonde on arrival, under the 'any other requirements' section. We will do our best, folks.

The route.

Those who have asked for routes to the hotel will either get maps direct from David in the next few days, or will find a map enclosed with this bulletin, if David can get them duplicated before my printing deadline.

The Programme.

The multi-commander game is being arranged and will take place. The teams are (as previously announced):-

RED. Harry Tucker, Henry Radice, Tony Jones.

BLUE. Ken Norris, John Poole, Bob Stuart.

GAME-MASTER. Michael Nethercot.

Michael, Ken and Harry have been in touch with each other to determine details, and things are apparently well in hand. Set-up will be on the Friday evening, if possible, so that play can start early on the next morning. The game will be completed on Saturday.

Some novel rules have been incorporated or proposed. Players on the same team may communicate in writing only, while opponents cannot communicate at all. A verbal conference for each team will be arranged at suitable intervals in a suitable locale - the bar, perhaps. Hidden units are to be in play, and victory conditions are to be determined by a point count, points being gained for the capture of cities (cities in the opponent's home country are worth more than those in neutrals).

All-in-all it looks like players and spectators alike are going to have an interesting and enjoyable match.

Those who aren't involved in the multi-commander game will find plenty to interest them. All the Test Series Games will be there, and all the Avalon Hill games (we hope Panzerblitz will arrive in time). Copies of S&T magazine, of ALBION, etc. etc. - all will be on hand. Plus a well-stocked bar.

We are happy to announce that there will be no film show - regrettably not even of the type suggested by Harry Tucker.....

I think David and I can cope with the games collection between us, so there's no need for you to bring anything on those lines unless requested to do so by David. However, if you have any interesting games, please bring them, if they are not already represented. I know of two brand-new games that will be there - HASTINGS and LANDWEHR.

Looking forward to meeting everyone on Friday October 30th.

Bulletin Page 5.

Cranwell House Developments.

Michael Nethercot was able to take a few minutes off work recently to tell me about the latest developments in CHD.

The consignment of Avalon Hill games has now been costed, and all the extras imposed by the Government have been totalled up, giving Michael a chance to work out a price for each game. These are as follows:-

Waterloo, Afrika Korps, Midway ..... £4-15-0d esch.  
Blitzkrieg, Anzio, Kriegspiel ..... £5-10-0d each.

These prices undercut those charged by GTC by around 5/- per game.

Copies of the above games are now available from Michael at 20 Moray Close, Rise Park, Romford, Essex. You may also order AH games from Michael which are not presently in stock, since he will want to know demand before ordering the next consignment from AH.

CHD is also negotiating for the rights to distribute American-designed games over here. About 20 titles are going to be available, if things work out all right, and you will be able to see one of the titles at the convention in October, where Michael will be anxious to have the game play-tested.

Also from CHD, Michael writes:- 'Some members may be interested to know that David & Charles have issued reprints of The Ordnance Survey, the sheets being a composite facsimile of the 1844 edition with Railway revisions up to 1888. The scale is one inch to a mile. Each map costs 15/- and copies may be ordered from Ordnance Survey stockists. Although this information is not strictly relevant to board gaming, we do have table-top enthusiasts who may wish to organise a horse and musket campaign in their own locality. Modern editions are not ideal for historical campaigns as the amount of detail shown is too great. I also know that some American readers are table top players; we know how they tend to be interested in historical gumph about the 'old country'. Anyway, I can arrange to post them copies on request - all part of the CHD service! Including airmail the price to the US will be \$3.'

Our thanks to Michael for this information and for the work CHD is doing on behalf of wargamers. I know you will give him your support.

The New Format.

This is the first bulletin in the new format. Most of you will get ALBION attached, but I hope that those who don't subscribe to ALBION like the new way of laying things out. Please let me have your comments etc.

JUTEX games.

The Jutland Experimental games (JUTEX 9 and 10) are still proceeding, and great fun they are proving to be, although perhaps rather long for some tastes.

One or two members have written to me asking whether another JUTEX game could be put under way, and I certainly think it's about time we got another started, possibly with modifications to make the game shorter.

Any offers? I already have the names of Colin Bonner, Rene Nokin and Bob Thomas. To get effective team play we need another three players plus a monitor. Please let me know.

Bulletin Page 6.

The main criticism of the JUTEX postal games seems to have been the length of time the game takes to get under way. Obviously, using the postal rules devised by Ken, search procedure plays a much more important part than in the AH rules; nevertheless, long periods spent in the search procedure tend to make the game drag somewhat, and perhaps contribute to the number of players who get fed up and drop out before the really exciting action begins.

I wonder whether any benefit would be obtained by asking players to make three search moves at once, in the first few hours of the game? Players could order a search pattern for their ships, adding orders to be obeyed should anything come to light in the searches. This would make the task of the monitor a bit 'hairy', but wouldn't involve more work than is currently involved in three distinct moves (and it would save on postage). Any comments?

If you would like to add your name to the Jutland list, please let me know. Please also let me have any suggestions for making the game a bit shorter, while not detracting from the search procedure and the action.

Play-By-Mail Procedures Book.

Each time a new member joins us, I tell him about the procedure we use for pbm games, explain the workings of the ICRK, etc. This takes time, and of course there is always the risk that I will forget to mention some crucial matter. Colin Bonner suggested to me that a book should be written by someone well-versed in pbm methods, so that copies would be available to new members.

As I see it, the topics to be covered would be:-

- Arrangement of matches.
- The mechanics of the icrk.
- Pbm sheets, when available.
- Use of special sheets (e.g. for Bulge).
- Rules and disputes.

Now, I'm not sure that I have time to do this at present, yet it seems to be a necessary part of our equipment for the future. Is any member willing to take on this job? Or even to help me in compiling the book? It could probably all be covered on about four pages of this size, but folded up to octavo size to make it a presentable document. AHIKS will pay, I hope.....

Offers to me please.

The Central Region / British Region AK match.

The first report on this match has reached me, from the pen of Harry Tucker. Harry writes:-

'Len played the usual opening gambit - Italian units attempted to isolate Benghazi, the Ariete armoured moving along the road to the east of the port. The German panzers and supporting units moved north east through the desert taking the Msus route, the recce unit moving slightly more easterly and reaching the higher ground to the south of Mechili on square N19. The British reaction was to form a defensive line west of Tobruch - G18,H17,K18,L19 - at the same time bringing up reinforcements from the east by sea. 2/2SG was left in Benghazi to hold up the Italians for another fortnight. The German reaction to this was a slow move through the high ground by 21/3 recce to N20, and a move south by 21/5 Panzer to P22, the latter taking supply 1 with it.'

Bulletin Page 7.

21/104 took up a defensive position at L17 whilst the bulk of the Italian formations were used to isolate Benghazi completely, the Ariete only proceeding east along the coast road. The British counter to this move was to deploy the arriving infantry brigades to the south to form a thin shield on the left flank of the main defence line. The Pol/Carp took up position on M21, protecting the left flank of 7/31 Motor on L19 and effectively blocking a move through by 21/3 recce. At the same time 41/7 and 41/11 moved out into the desert to M23 and N26, thus challenging the 21/5 Panzer to attack or take another route. (A quick glance at Len's third move indicates that the latter is exactly what has happened - 21/3 recce and 21/5 panzer, together with the only German supply of the board, have moved around the south of the high ground to positions further east). The British command are extremely generous in their praise of the submariners - they are doing a magnificent job in denying the Axis forces of their badly needed supplies.

Comment is reserved at the moment. I think that perhaps Len is making a mistake in splitting his offensive power by trying to outflank the British, or giving the appearance of trying to do so, if this latest move is a feint. I think one has to destroy as many of the limited British units as possible in these early stages of the game. But - nous verrons! Len may be completely hoodwinking me!' Thanks for the comments, Harry, and looking forward to hearing more about your ~~WGL~~ game in due course. Comments from Malcolm will be welcomed on the progress of his game against Frank Nau. Come to that, I will offer to print the Central Region Capitulation, if they like.....

From David Bell. (Peace Corps, Monrovia, Liberia).

'My professional interests are sociology and social psychology (e.g. studying people in conflict situations), I play advanced versions of almost any wargame, I'm 26 and SAFE! (No army for me - on the other hand I've never figured quite how many battalions there are in a platoon). I want to go into miniatures but haven't started yet. My wife and I will be passing through the British region in early January and I am soliciting invitations! If anyone up there (a) might find my interests interesting, (b) can sleep two, (c) can provide entertainment for my non-playing wife, and (d) will be relatively free at that time, he might write me. To the limit of our finances and my wife's patience, we'll try to visit.

In addition, if anyone knows any (a) wargamers or (b) persons who might be introduced to AH wargames, in France, Benelux, or East or West Germany, I'd like to hear about them.

Good luck on your upcoming regional meeting. I am very interested in monitored games and will want to know how your multi-commander game goes. I'm sorry I can't get in on it. Dave.'

Thanks for the letter, Dave, and I hope we can arrange for you to see something of British wargamers when you get here. If you want to visit the frozen north of England in January, then there are two beds at 6 St. George's Avenue for you if you want. Your wife will no doubt join in the constant raillery I suffer from my own. If nothing else, we can keep the girls entertained by getting them to dig the garden..... Let me know dates and things, and we'll fix something.

Anyone else who can make a similar offer please write to Dave.

A Round-Up of Regional Bulletins.

I have four bulletins on hand at present - two from Joe Seliga (Eastern Region) and two from Ted Holcombe (Western Region). I will skip through these in my usual haphazard way and extract details of interest.

Eastern Region.

Joe asks his members for suggestions for the new name of AHIKS. (see the Kommandeur on the same subject). In many ways, we are used to the old one, and although all our activities aren't AH-orientated, there seems to be some case for retaining the name, at least until stocks of letterheads etc. run out. Any ideas from over here? How about a new name which uses the same initials? An Historically Inaccurate Kriegspiel Society???

Anyone who wants a game of Anzio Beachhead or Bastogne (S&T issue 20) should contact Norman Macdonald via Joe. Address below.

In the September bulletin, Joe relates the progress of the Diplomacy game played at Bob Johnson's during our stay. He says that 'Don, as the guest of honour, accepted that prime Diplomacy country - Italy.' I must confess that I don't remember a smile of joy on receiving the announcement that I was to play Italy, but Joe's memory may be better than mine..... Personally, I think the smiles of joy were on the faces of my opponents.. but I might be wrong. Anyway, you can read my account of this Diplomacy game to end all Diplomacy games in the 'British Idiot in America' series.

Joe also mentions the trip we made to the Aberdeen Proving Grounds, which is another item to be covered in my report. Joe doesn't mention, however, what happened to the photograph of him holding up a 20-ton bomb. If it is available for public consumption, I would like to print it in a future newsletter. How about it, Joe?

A useful column on tips for players is a feature of Joe's bulletins. I hope he doesn't mind me reprinting some of the new ideas for the British region.

Tom Oleson uses miniature dice to keep track of the odds of battles. He places them directly on the stack in question. This is a useful idea for those who don't make a move all at one time, but have to come back to the board at intervals to carry on with the thinking; indications of the odds of battles you have already planned would be most useful in such circumstances.

Roger Seliga trims each corner of the units slightly to avoid wear; counters and boards can be sprayed with a clear varnish to add further protection.

Jim Wallace has developed a storage container for ten games permanently set up. Joe publishes a list of materials required, plus a set of plans and instructions. The finished product measures about 4'x4'x2'.

Thanks, Joe, for the bulletins - keep 'em coming!

Joe Seliga, Eastern Regional Director, 15 Windswept Drive, Trenton, New Jersey 08690.

Western Region.

Clearly Ted Holcombe has read of our match with the Central Region at AK. He announces that the Western Region wish to challenge us British to a multi-commander game of either Bulge, Stalingrad, or D Day (S&T variants). Knowing the region to be pretty well-occupied with games at the moment, I am reluctant to accept until I have confirmation from you. Please let

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me know if you are interested. It occurs to me, also, that many of you will not be familiar with the S&T variants mentioned, since they appeared in early issues. However, let me know your views, and I will let Ted know how things stand.

The rest of Ted's bulletins consists of domestic questions, so there's nothing else which involves us. However I must comment on the cover Ted puts on the bulletins - it makes the bulletin look more like a magazine, and must take a long time to print. Good for you, Ted - keep them coming!

J.T.Holcombe, USA ENGR District L.A., 300 North Los Angeles Street, Los Angeles, California 90053.

The David Wood Clay Throwing (International) Company.

Members have obviously been fired with the idea of AHIKS ashtrays. (Fired - clay - pottery - get it??? Oh well.)

David has already had an order for six ashtrays for Bob Johnson, so the Queen's Award For Industry 1970 is a virtual certainty now. He will be bringing some of his products to the regional meeting, where they will be sold, to smokers and non-smokers alike, at exorbitant prices.

David is not to be content just with ashtrays, however, and tells me that the AHIKS monogram can be put onto virtually anything that can be made from china clay. He is working on AHIKS die-shakers at the moment, and will keep us informed as to progress.

His manufacturing instincts having been aroused, David is starting to spread his activities into other fields. He has started work on an AHIKS bed; the hexagonal design has already been worked out, but at present he has struck a snag in the shape of stacking rules. Can anyone advise him??? There's no prize for guessing what object, of hexagonal shape and with the AHIKS monogram, will be found under the bed, and which will be supplied free with every order.

(At this point I will stop the bulletin and await news of new members).

HOLD THE FRONT PAGE!!

New Members.

We welcome two new members to the Region this month.

David Chaitin, K'vutzet Urim, Doar Na Negev, Israel. Yes, David is at the same kibbutz as Richard Redd; Richard assures me that no take-over of the region is contemplated. Yet. David has games as Richard.

David Karfoot, 9 Mountbarrow Road, Ulverston, Lancashire. David owns Bulge, Anzio, AK and 1914.

We hope our new members enjoy their membership with us, and the games, correspondence etc. Sorry to confuse everyone with two Davids at the same time.

Now - turn over to find out what games these new members, and other longer-standing members, want to play. The opponents wanted list is quite large this time.

Just before you do so, however, please note that John Lilley has moved, and can now be found at 112 Croydon Road, Reigate Surrey.

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Opponents Wanted.

Richard Redd would still like a game of postal chess. He would be willing to act as director for a regional or even AHIKS-wide chess tourney. Offers, please, to K'vutzat Urim, Doar Na Negev, Israel.

Colin Bonner wants an opponent for Stalingrad. 11 Langdale Terrace, Whitby, Yorkshire.

David Karfoot wants an opponent for Bulge. 9 Mountbarrow Road, Ulverston, Lancashire.

David Chaitin wants opponents for one or two of D Day, Waterloo and Stalingrad. K'vutzat Urim, Doar Na Negev, Israel.

Looks like we have a match here - Colin Bonner / David Chaitin at Stalingrad. Please get the icrk from David Wood when you have fixed things up.

I hope that is the complete list - truth to tell, I had the list on a piece of paper on my desk this morning, but ~~the woman~~ I live with my dear ever-loving wife has tidied it up. So it has gone and itsbed hasn't been slept in. Hope my memory serves me right about the members wanting games.

Please let me know of any other requests.

Multi-commander game challenge.

Most of you will have read that the Western Region have issued another challenge to us, this time for a multi-commander game of Bulge, Stalingrad or something similar, with amended rules. I know most of you have as many games going as you can cope with, but if anyone is interested in taking part in the British team, please let me know. I will, of course, have to refuse the challenge if the response isn't sufficient.

Play-Testing at the Regional Meeting.

Michael Nethercot asks me to announce that anyone who hasn't yet fixed up a game at the regional meeting can take part in play-testing new games. Two are available, at least, at the moment - HASTINGS (being considered by Cranwell House) and LANDWEHR (invented by Fred Davis, who recently let me have a copy to pass on to Michael).

If you are interested in having a look at these games, please drop Michael a line; he might be able to let you have a copy of the rules before the meeting itself, so you can do some preparation.

Finally,

please excuse any errors etc. which have crept in due to the hasty preparation of this bulletin at the same time as ALBION. After two or three simultaneous publications, I will get the hang of things. Thanks to everyone for their continued support and enthusiasm.

See you all on the 30th!

(It's your round, I think.....)

Don Turnbull, 6 St. George's Avenue, Timperley, Cheshire.

P.S. BUY WAR GAMES (or is it WAR GAMING?) by Andrew Wilson - Pelican.

Very interesting indeed, though at times out of our depth!



NEW GAME — SPOT THE PASSENGER . . .